Barbless Circle Hook News

BCH

Issue 5, December 2011

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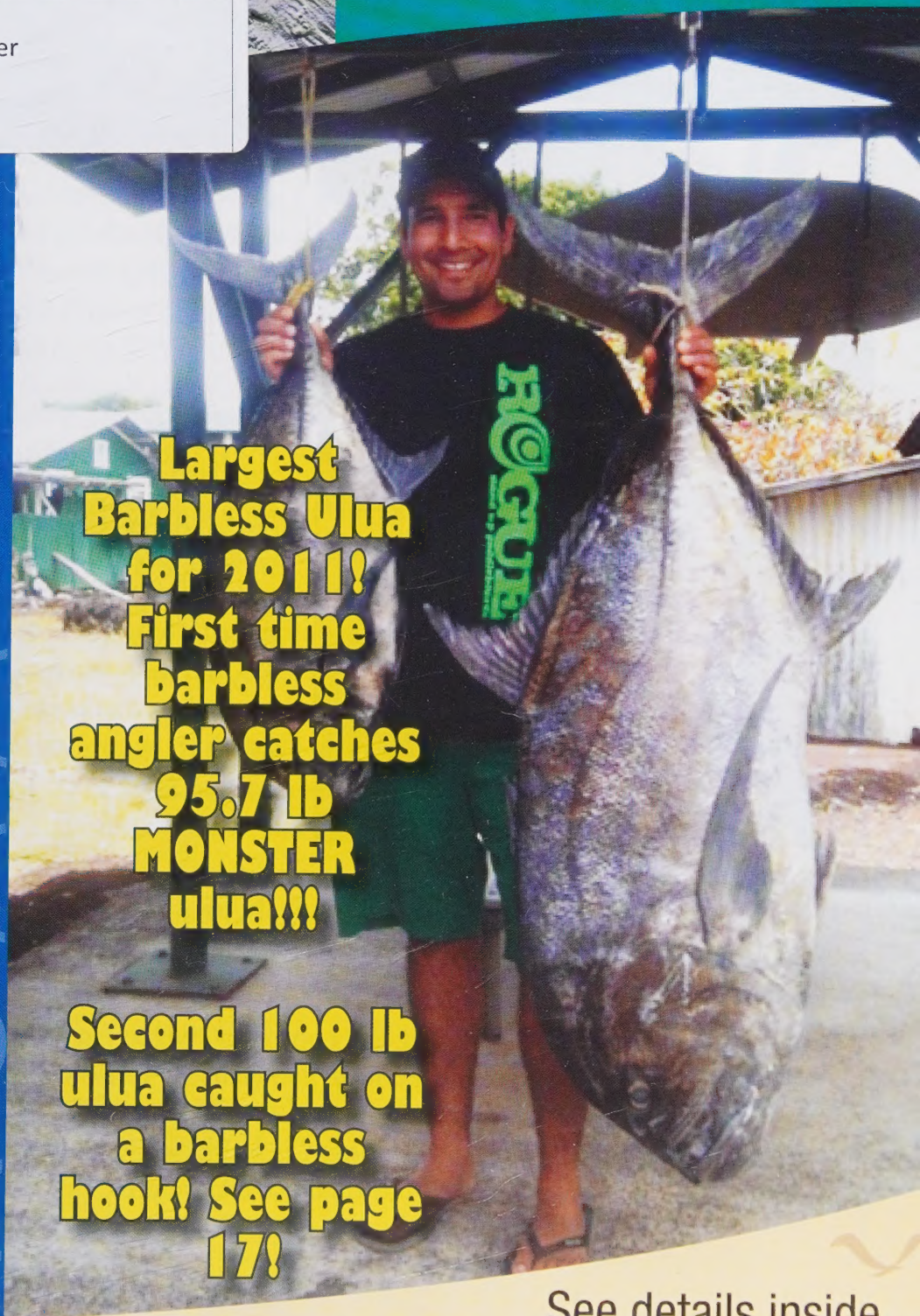


Largest Barbless Ulua for 2011! First time barbless angler catches 95.7 lb MONSTER ulua!!!

Second 100 lb ulua caught on a barbless hook! See page 17!

See details inside.

2011 Happenings

***NEWS FLASH** – June 2011 – First-time barbless angler Stephen Arquitola catches 95.7 pound ulua on barbless circle hooks he got at the last Pole Benda tournament. "I received free hooks at the NOAA booth which was set up at the Pole Benda Tournament and figured I'd try it out. Was this my first time...yes, never used barbless before."*

Stephen Arquitolo, largest 2011 BCH ulua, 95.7 lbs.

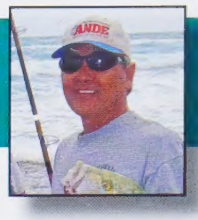
The rest is history.

June 2011. Stephen Arquitola describes the events of the day like this: "I took my friend fishing because it was his birthday. So we decided to go to our secret spot. We were fishing small game and I hooked up a good size akule, so I decided to slide it on my barbless 16/0 hook. The strike came about 15 minutes later and the battle was on. It took a good initial run and almost drained my 454 Newell. I finally stopped him and began to bring him in. He took two more runs and finally gave up. The battle lasted about 15 minutes. It was the best fight so far for me."

Keep up the good work guys! The 2011 season was full of the usual "barbless challenges", a few new tournaments and fishing club contacts as well as the end of an old familiar tournament that will be missed.

Seven tournaments featured a "barbless challenge" within the usual tournament formats. The Atla-Spac Weighmaster Obake Shootout, the 2nd annual Nanko's Eastside Challenge, the 3rd annual GT Masters Cup, the 13th annual Pole Benda, the Tokunaga Ulua Challenge, and the 36th annual Hilo Casting Club tournament. The Barbless Circle Hook (BCH) Project also continued with its fishing club, keiki, and other outreach activities during the busy year.

Manager's Corner



This year was another year of successful outreach activities. The successes of this project all start with you the fisherman. Many thanks to all of the tournament organizers who included the "Barbless Challenge" into their formats. Unfortunately I couldn't be everywhere at the same time, so I must apologize because I could not accommodate all invitations. I hope the funding continues and that there will be more time to get to all the tournaments and outreach opportunities in this coming year.

The BCH project went to the first International Circle Hook Symposium this year. The project made a poster presentation which was very well received. The mainland folks were surprised that we used circle hooks as a standard shoreline hook; they had no idea about what we use much less that we have gone further and are now "going barbless" voluntarily. Most of the mainland anglers are only now hearing about using circle hooks. It was interesting that many talks dealt with "how to fish" or "set" the circle hook. I'm glad to be working in Hawaii with all of you guys.

Thanks again for trying out and using barbless circle hooks. Whenever I go shorecasting I lose a bunch of leads and bankrupt quite a lot in certain areas. Checking bait regularly and bankrupting in the process made me realize how much more we are doing to help out the fish by going barbless. Thinking about all the still baited hooks on my bankrupt rigs and the potential for anything picking them up and getting hooked made me realize that this is yet another way that we can help minimize some post-hooking injury. This is especially true since we don't have control over anything hooked up on a bankrupt rig so by taking advantage of the self-shedding properties we can still help conserve our resources even if we bankrupt occasionally. Just something for everyone to think about when you go fishing or cannot sleep at night.

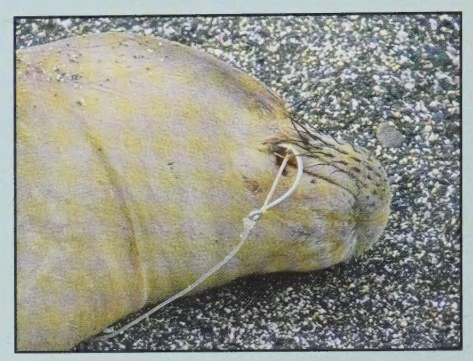
I would also like to thank Brian Kimata for his thoughts and contribution of the article on the use of offset circle hooks. I also believe likewise and therefore have not given out offset barbless circle hooks for the project. Thanks Brian for your thoughts.

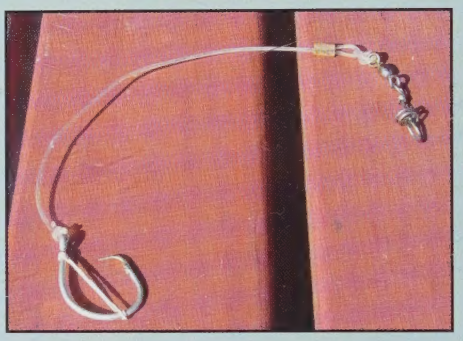
Finally, a reminder to fish responsibly, show respect to other beach goers, and please keep our fishing areas cleaner than when you arrived. Thanks for being role models.... kurt

Program Manager's Message

IT WORKS!

The ease of shedding a barbless circle hook has been on record now since 2007. Every year an average of 5-10 seals show up with a barbed circle hook in some part of their body. The undeniable "proof" that the barbless circle hooks could easily be self-shed comes from this 2007 Big Island incident which was documented by NOAA researchers.



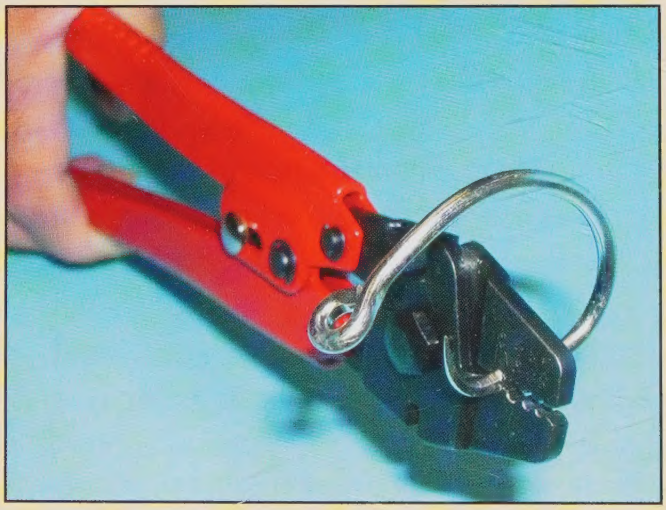


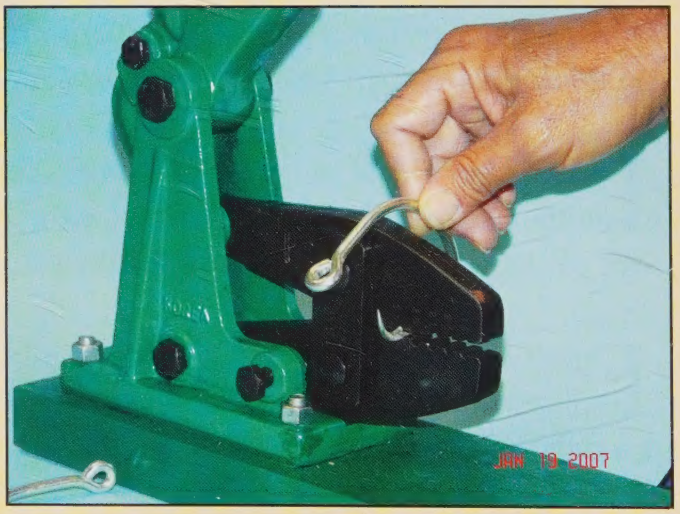
"Well, we got super lucky last night and got the hook out without even touching the seal. I've attached two pics so you can see the hook in the mouth and the hook by itself. It appears that the fisherman may have cut off the barb so the seal actually pulled the hook out herself when she reacted to me getting close, she moved away and popped it right out!!"

A lot of unintended interactions can have a similar outcome if barbless circle hooks are used by responsible fishermen. Many thanks to the fisherman who used this one...you were definitely ahead of the game.

Please practice responsible fishing.Keep on using them. – Kurt

DIY barbless hook – not sold in stores.





The Truth Behind Offset Circle Hooks

by Brian Kimata

Some people bend them themselves. Some people buy them that way. At some time, you probably have used them yourselves. What are they? I'm referring to offset circle hooks and why you shouldn't be using them. But first of all, what is an offset circle hook? Well let's start with what's a non-offset circle hook. Non-offset circle hooks are circle hooks that have a tip that is bent back in a plane parallel, or nearly parallel to the shank. They're the most common form of circle hooks and the ones you are most likely to see. By contrast, the Atlantic States Fisheries Commission defines a non-offset hook as one with the point turned back perpendicular to the shank. The point is bent back with a major deviation from the plane parallel to the shank. As a Honolulu tackle store owner, I try to help my customers hook and land more fish. Offset circle hooks have been proven to be less effective with less strike and penetration force. To visualize this inefficiency, imagine attempting to drive a nail when it's placed at an angle to the board. Its energy is not directed to the point squarely making it much more difficult. They also tend to hang up on the ocean floor easier, so you can see why I try not to recommend them.

Offset circle hooks also harbor a much darker side. Studies from the Marine Resource Research Institute (MRRI) have shown that offset circle hooks have deep hooking rates (gut and throat hooking), of 23%, and mortalities of 10% (South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources data). By contrast, sailfish catch and release data show deep hooking catches of just 2% with standard circle hooks. (Prince et al. 2002). This should not be surprising as non-offset hooks were designed to lip or jaw hook fish. Non-offset hooks have even been pulled from fish stomachs as the rolled parallel tip avoids the throat and gut cavity. This does not happen with offset hooks, and larger offset angles increase the likelihood of a deep hooking.

This reduction in deep hooking is so dramatic that as of June 1, 2008, Florida requires non-offset circle hooks while bait fishing in the Gulf Coast. The federal government still allows the use of offsets there but discourages their use.

While I could not find any deep hooking data on non-fish species it would seem logical that increases would occur here as well. Incidental hooking of turtles and seals occur and the use of non-offset circle hooks can help protect these populations too. A 2007 NOAA-documented incident indicates that seals are capable of removing a barbless circle hook themselves. So, the next time you think of bending your circle hook, bend the barb down and leave the tip alone. You'll help the environment and put more fish in your cooler too!

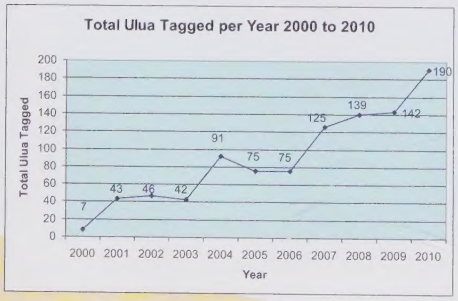
Prince Ed, Ortiz M, Venizelos A. 2002. A comparison of circle hook and "J" hook performance in recreational catch-and-release fisheries for billfish. American Fisheries Society Symposium 30:66-79.

Ulua and Oio Tagging Projects

State of HI Ulua Tagging Project

Aloha fishermen! It was nice seeing and meeting with many of you this summer at various tournaments around the state. We appreciate all of your help and support of the DAR Ulua Tagging project. Each year we continue to grow and recruit new volunteers each season. We currently have more than 3500 volunteer anglers in our project that have tagged close to 38,000 papio/ulua statewide! Along with almost 5000 recoveries, of which more than half (2650) have been re-released giving us a huge amount of data.

A growing trend with support from the Pacific Islands Fisheries Group and many tournaments statewide has been the increase in numbers of ulua tagged each year. We have seen since the start of our project this number steadily increase year after year. Much of the tagging has occurred during papio/ulua tournaments which host the PIFG Tagging Challenge. These tournaments recognize the need to support the Ulua Tagging Project while at the same time helping conserve our precious resource. (See graph). This is a win-win situation for all, especially for our papio and ulua.



We have also been busy collecting papio/ulua heads and gonads for life history studies. So far, with generous donations from many anglers, we have collected close to 200 samples of omilu and white papio/ulua of various sizes. NOAA Fisheries Science Center is assisting us with analysis and the reading of the otolith to determine the age of individual fish. This information will be used to update the main Hawaiian Islands age and growth curves for the omilu and whites.

We would like to thank all of the anglers of Hawaii for their tremendous support and participation. Together we will be able to better manage our papio and ulua resources for future generations.

Clay Tam,
Ulua Tagging Project

Oio Tagging Project

The Oio Tagging Project had a great year in 2011! Membership has risen to over 400 volunteers state wide. Over 2500 tagged fish have been reported and since July 2009, 32 tagged oio have been recaptured. The Oio Tagging Project expanded in 2010 by sponsoring oio tagging categories in the two ATLAPAC fishing tournaments, the Obake Shootout held October 1-3 and the oio Invitational held December 3-5. Many great prizes were awarded through a participant lottery drawing such as 13 ft shore casting rod and reel combos and hand-held GPS units. This gave the project more exposure and interaction with recreational fishers and more anglers volunteered to tag oio. We look forward to supporting ATLAPAC in their 2011 fishing tournaments and sponsoring more oio tagging categories in 2012.

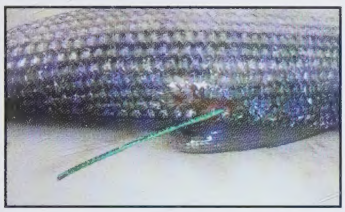
Now in its third year, the tagging project has received even more support from the fishing community through continued involvement and additional exposure from the Hawaii Goes Fishing episode that first aired April 29, 2011 (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48IWY_iCyPU).

Much Mahalo to all the project volunteers and supporters and we look forward to another great year in 2012!

Kimberlee Harding,
Oio Tagging Project Coordinator
http://oiotaggingproject.com/

PIFG Oio Tagging Project

PIFG's project to tag and release 3000 oio or bonefish off Oahu's leeward coast was launched in 2010 with the support of the NOAA Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program. This project has two primary goals: 1) to collect life history information on



oio from Hawaiian waters and 2) to test a new large-scale tagging strategy for deploying tags. Another aspect of this project will be to document the difference between the two bonefish species found in Hawaii: the round and sharp jaw. Prior to this effort, tagging had been done primarily on shallow water flats by the rod and reel fishing community. This project targets the offshore schooling portion of the bonefish population that has not been previously targeted by past and current tagging projects. So far, 2 tagging trips have resulted in 1017 oio being tagged with 13 recoveries to date and 43 fish biosamples for length, weight, gonads, stomach content, and otoliths.

If you happen to catch an oio with an unfamiliar **green** tag in it please call PIFG (808) 265-4962 to report the recovery. The information you provide will help to sustainably manage our oio stocks for the future. Thank you.

Brian Funai, PIFG Oio Tagging Project

TROPHY VS LOMI
O'io
Bonefish
PIFG
O'io Tagging Project
If you recover a tagged o'io call 265-4962
Be prepared to provide the following critical information:
1. Your name, address, and telephone number.
2. Capture date, island, and fishing location.
3. Tag number.
4. Fork length – measure from tip of the nose to "V" in the tail.
5. There are 2 species - Sharp Jaw *Albula virgata* which has a bright green/yellow dot under the pectoral fins, and Round Jaw *Albula glossodonta* has no green/yellow dot.
Reward
In return for your valuable information, you will receive a free special edition t-shirt featuring original artwork (seen above) by artist and fisherman Mike Sakamoto.
For More Information
PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERIES GROUP
150 Hamakua Dr. PBN# 430
Kailua, HI 96734
Ph: 808 265-4962
Web: fishtoday.org

Monk Seals and Marine Turtles in 2011

Monk Seals

Approximately 200 individual seals have been identified living in the main Hawaiian Islands, and some of them continue to be accidentally hooked by shorefishing gear. In 2010, 10 hooking incidents were recorded, but the number has so far diminished in 2011, with only 5 incidents reported through September. A few of these occurrences have resulted in the seal losing the hook without assistance, but most require hands-on rescues to remove the gear. As evidenced by previous rescues, this is potentially dangerous both for the animal and the researcher alike. The proactive voluntary use of a self-shedding barbless circle hook by fishermen could result in a less injurious outcome should an accidental hooking occur, and ideally the hook being shed from the animal without human intervention. – *John Henderson, Hawaiian Monk Seal Research Program.*

Marine Turtles

Hawaiian sea turtle strandings have been documented by the PIFSC Marine Turtle Research Program since 1982. There are currently more than 6100 stranding reports of which approximately 1480 involved fishing gear such as line, net, or hooks. Of those, a little more than half involved fishing line and approximately 25% involved hooks. A little over half of these turtles were successfully released alive. Reports are also received from recreational divers about entangled or hooked turtles, but these reports are not included in the stranding reports. By using barbless circle hooks, sea turtles and other incidentally captured animals may be easily released without much harm to the animal. It may also prevent loss of fishing gear to the fishermen if the hook can be dislodged instead of being taken with the animal. – *Shawn Murakawa, Marine Turtle Research Program.*

Earl Miyamoto *Lisa White*

MARINE WILDLIFE PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH BCHP

Who are we? *A special project at the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)*

What's our main focus? *The prevention and reduction of monk seal and sea turtle interactions*

Our purpose? *To reduce the impact of accidental fishery interactions with monk seals and sea turtles*

How are we doing that? *By encouraging recreational fishermen to fish barbless!*

Why fish barbless? *Smashing the barb on your hooks is a quick, proactive measure to reduce injury to animals that take your hook. Fishing barbless is a simple gear alternative and concrete mitigation measure to reduce the potentially harmful impacts of fishery interactions on seals and turtles. By smashing your barb you reduce the post-hooking injury to the animal. In the event of a hooking you should feel confident to help as long as you feel safe. Cut your line as close to the hook as possible and if the animal is lightly hooked try to remove the hook. If it's barbless it should come out easily!*

Mahalo to all of you who are fishing barbless and to Kurt for allowing us to work with the BCH project.

Contact us with questions about seals or turtle at (808) 832-5017.

2011 Barbless Circle Hook Project Activities
September 2010 ~ August 2011

September 2010
- Mililani Mauka Middle School Fishing Club – 9/28/10

October 2010
- Atlapac Weighmaster Obake Shootout – "BCH Challenge" – 10/3/10
- 5th Annual Fishing and Seafood Festival – 10/10/10

December 2010
- Atlapac Annual Oio Tournament –– "BCH Challenge" 12/5/10
- Nanko and Aloha Army Eastside Challenge – "BCH Challenge" – 12/12/10

April 2011
- GT Master's Cup Fishing Tournament – "BCH Challenge" – 4/10/11
- Lanai Keiki Tournament – 4/30/11

May 2011
- International Circle Hook Symposium – 5/4/11
- 13th Annual Pole Benda – "BCH Challenge" – 5/29/11

June 2011
- S. Tokunaga Store Ulua Challenge – "BCH Challenge" – 6/12/11

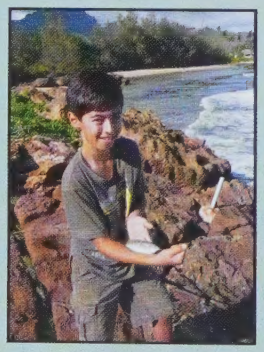
July 2011
- Hilo Casting Club, 36th Annual Fishing Tournament – "BCH Challenge" – 7/16/11
- KMart 14th Annual Kauai Shoreline Fishing Tournament – 7/17/11

August 2011
- Big Island Parks and Recreation Ohana Fishing Tournament – 8/21/11

Kids' Activities

Kalaheo Elementary Fishing Club

The Kalaheo Elementary School Fishing Club is alive and well. Mr. Joel Kawate is again sharing his love and knowledge for fishing, diving, and the ocean with all the club members. The BCH project along with Earl Miyamoto and Lisa White from the State made presentations to the club members. The Friday afternoon fishing session targeted the much sought after moi. The students learned what to look for, where to fish, and the various gears that are used when targeting moi. Unfortunately, no moi were harmed in this fishing session but a hinalea was caught and released and one good hook up was lost during the fight. Better luck next time! Many thanks to the club and Mr. Kawate for inviting us. Special thanks to Principal Erik Burkman for supporting the fishing club and allowing us to come visit every year.

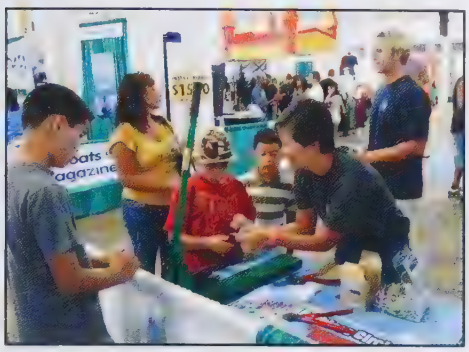


Mililani Mauka Middle School Fishing Club

The BCH project was invited by Mililani Middle School Fishing Club to talk about barbless circle hooks. The fishing club is run by teacher Jake Tamaye, has been active for the past 11 years, and averages between 20 and 30 members annually. They meet every other week for an hour after school and have fishing outings one Saturday every other month. Kawamoto met with the club and made 2 BCH presentations as the club members were also involved with Naoki Hayashi who taught them the ins and outs of making a gyotaku print. The students were a very animated bunch with many questions. The new turtle tackle box sticker was a big hit as were the free hooks. The students all promised to try the barbless hooks the next time they go fishing.

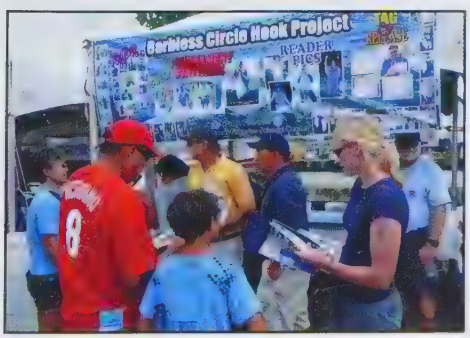
Outreach Activities - 2011

The **Third Annual Hawaii Ocean Expo** again provided the BCH project an opportunity to engage the public. This year the expo was held on April 9-10 at the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall. The crowds



were down on Saturday but took a turn for the better on Sunday with the fishermen and families coming for the weigh-in of the GT Masters Cup shoreline fishing tournament. Our dedicated volunteers gave away more than 600 sets of brochures and about 1000 bags of hooks to the crowds of ocean enthusiasts.

The BCH team did a bang up job of pulling together all the essential elements that go into making a successful outreach event. **The Fifth Annual Hawaii Fishing and Seafood Festival** is the single largest event in the BCH outreach year. This year an estimated



25,000 people attended the 1 day event. The BCH booth was manned by Shawn Murakawa, John Henderson, Lisa White, Russell Ito, Walter Machado, Mike Abundo, and Kurt Kawamoto. The team gave away everything that we brought over

and then some. At times we literally had a line of people waiting to get in the booth to get their calendar cards stamped while they got free hook samples. Deborah's new banner full of 2010 catches of fish literally stopped traffic in front of the booth while people looked at and photographed the new 8 ft banner. The banner provided us with ample opportunity to engage the public and inform them about the project.

At the noontime break at the main tent, Eric Schwaab, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, gave out the Largest Barbless Circle Ulua Award for 2010 to Kahana Itozaki for his 85.2 pound ulua caught during the Ohana tournament in August. Kahana and his fellow Hilo Casting Club members swept the top 4 places of the tournament with the top 3 places going

to fishermen who caught their uluas using barbless circle hooks. This resulted in another first for the project.

The BCH Project had an opportunity to attend the **First International Circle Hook Symposium** in Miami this year. It was an interesting experience to meet researchers from across the United States as well as from the rest of the world where circle hooks are not the "go to" hook for fishing. We in Hawaii are lucky

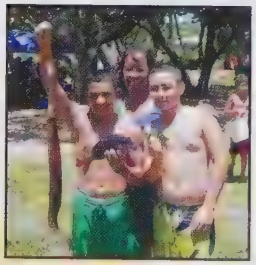
to have used circle hooks for our shore fishing activities since "small kid time". The rest of the world is just trying them out for the first time and don't yet understand our love for these effective hooks. We in Hawaii have moved beyond these newbies to the next step of "Going Barbless". Hawaii's anglers should be proud to be leading the way.

Tournament Activity – 2011

The **7th Annual Lanai Keiki Catch Tournament** at beautiful Manele Bay. More than 90 Lanai kids and a few Maui relatives tried their luck. Fishing began on Friday night at 6 pm and lasted until noon on Saturday. The fishing was slower than normal for some reason but there was still lots of fun

for all. Prizes and free food for the keiki were all donated by the community. A local Maui gyotaku artist and his able assistants worked with the keiki in making their own gyotaku creations for free! The kids had a great time again.

This year the tournament was successfully run by the Lanai Fire Department's own George Purdy with support from the Four Seasons Manele Resort and many others. Although the "conservation of our resources" was the theme again, things were a bit different because Officer Kim Massey who had been the driving force behind the tournament got promoted last year (CONGRATULATIONS!!!) and had to move to Maui. Thank you Officer Massey and good luck in your career.



The BCH project flew to Kauai to outreach at the **KMart 14th Annual Shoreline Tournament**. The event attracted approximately 200 adults and 100 kids again this year. Although there was no "barbless challenge" within the tournament, it could happen next year just in time for their special 15th annual tournament. The largest ulua weighed in at 94 pounds. Kauai's number of 100 pound + ulua for this year was reported to be at 7 up to the time of this tournament. The kids all had a great time with the many age categories, species of fish, and special fish groupings to make winning something even easier. See http://thegardenisland.com/sports/recreation/article_bd93e27c-b1d4-11e0-ac25-001cc4c03286.html for more info. This family-oriented event moved its location to the front parking lot for more space as it is continually growing in popularity. Earl and Lisa did a great job outreaching to the crowd. All of the bags of hooks ran out early as usual. The boxes of brochures mailed over early could not be found but store manager Jarett Chytka promised that as soon as they were found they would be posted outside in their information racks and he would put a special rack in the Sporting Goods section to give them away in the store as well. Now that's support!

The Barbless Circle Hook Project outreached at the last scheduled fishing tournament on the Big Island. **The Hawaii Island Parks and Recreation Ohana Fishing Tournament** is genuinely a

Tournament Activity - 2011

family-oriented tournament which features kids, women, team, and kupuna categories. This year they had a record 356 participating anglers. Although there was no "Barbless Challenge" within the tournament there were anglers who used barbless and caught on them too. Last year the top 3 places were won by Hilo Casting Club members who voluntarily used barbless circle hooks. The tournament organizers have asked the BC project to become involved next year with a "Barbless Challenge" within the tournament. The project looks forward to working with the organizers and participating next year.

BCH Tournament Challenges

Weighmasters Obake Shootout, October 3, 2010

The Atlapac Fishing Club's Weighmasters Obake Shootout featured 162 fishermen, of which

39% entered the "barbless challenge". The catches were about average for this kind of off-season shoreline tournament. The barbless anglers caught some fish but nothing spectacular. Oh well, that's fishing. Angler Glenn Manuel took first place in the Other Game category with an 18 pound kaku. Other barbless catches included a 10.5 pound white ulua, a 5.7, and a 5.15 pound oio, and the keiki anglers managed to catch a small nenue and a red weke.

The more than 200 spectators and participants were entertained by a hula halau and the raffle while they waited for the official results. The official tournament queens were Cindy Palaracio and Margot Mendoza from Hawaii Goes Fishing while Dave Lancaster was the emcee for the event. There were also additional booths such as the Ulua Tagging, Shelter Lodge, Black Water fishing gear, the food tent, the fishing gear sale tent, and Sugoi restaurant tent for the spectators to visit at the popular Pier 38 weigh in site.

Atlapac Oio Tournament, December 5, 2010

This year Atlapac's annual Club Oio tournament was open to members of 3 shoreline fishing clubs. Barbless participation was at 76%. Due to the inclement weather conditions, the catches were down although a few hardy anglers did well. Nine qualifying fishes were caught with barbless circle hooks (47% of the total number caught). The largest oio (7.8 pounds) was caught on a standard circle hook. The fishing clubs supported the Oio Tagging Project (http://www.oiotaggingpro-

Tournament Activity – 2011

ject.com/) which is now housed at the University of Hawaii in the Hawaii Cooperative Fishery Research Unit by featuring an oio tagging category. Atlapac also had its own oio tagging jackpot category in which the winner is determined by adding up the fork lengths of the tagged and released oio.

Nanko's Eastside Challenge, December 12, 2010

Nanko's Eastside Challenge is a The second annual Eastside Challenge weigh-in was held at Kualoa Beach park. There was 53% participation in the "Barbless Challenge" this year. The anglers had to contend with the rainy weather conditions and the slow shoreline bite this month and managed to catch some fish.

The "barbless challenge" had only 2 anglers weigh in qualifying oio. The largest oio of the competition was a 7.2 pounder caught on a standard circle hook. Perhaps the most interesting development of the tournament was the catch of a papio that looked like it was a cross between an omilu and a white. Measurements and biological samples were taken for later analysis to determine the species. In the picture the mystery fish is on top, a white papio is on the bottom.

GT Masters Cup, April 9, 2011

The Barbless Challenge within the GT Masters Cup tournament had about 45% of the anglers sign up to try barbless. There were only 5 barbless-caught fish that qualified under the strict tournament rules. Many of the competitors that I spoke to caught fish during the tournament, but said that the fish bit the barbed hooks this year. I guess that's fishing.

Other fishes were caught on barbless that did not qualify but served to highlight the project and the positive catch results. Junior angler (who couldn't enter the tournament because it was only open to adults) James "Braddahs" Fujimori, who fished with his dad managed to beat his dad and many adult anglers using barbless hooks. The tournament organizers recognized his achievement by hanging his nonqualifying barbless fish. Many pictures were taken, announcements made, and the BCH project rewarded him with a special award on stage.

12th Annual Pole Benda, May 29, 2011

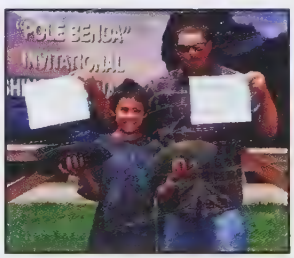
This year it was announced that the 13th annual Pole Benda tournament would be the last. This final tournament saw all the regulars sign up for one last hurrah. The Big Island participants were all uniformly saddened to see it reach its conclusion. The tireless organizers, Eddie and Edlyn Carvalho, have given

Tournament Activity – 2011

back to the community for many years and finally decided that it was time for a rest. The BCH project awarded the long-time backers of the project a Certificate of Appreciation for supporting the project for the past 6 years. Along with the certificate the Carvalhos were also awarded a copy of Jack Randall's "Reef and Shore Fishes of the Hawaiian Islands" as a thank you and reference guide in case they decide to start up again.

This relatively small tournament again surpassed all expectations with a whopping 79% of the total number of participants signing up for the Barbless Challenge. This is the highest of any tournament on any island since the start of the project. They also had the largest junior angler participation of any year that the project had attended. There were not a lot of barbless catches but there was a lot of trying. After all it is called "fishing" and not "catching".

Progress in getting ideas across to the fishing public was also accomplished as witnessed by hearing a fisherman say to some of his fishermen friends that he crimped down his hooks for the tournament because when he got to his fishing spot a monk seal was there. He told them that they should do the same if that happened to them. The other fishermen agreed that that was what should be done and for the turtles as well. Just hearing that made all the years of work worthwhile. Outreach is making a positive difference. The fishermen themselves are mentoring each other and spreading the ideas. It takes a long time to change mind sets and this important outreach needs to be continued. The fact that there was 79% sign up for the barbless challenge in the Pole Benda was incredible.



After all the prizes and awards were given out there was a special farewell and thank you from the Carvalhos which touched the audience deeply. The entire gymnasium formed a line and said their last thank yous and gave them hugs for a job well done while recognizing that this was the end of an era.

Tokunaga Ulua Challenge, June 12, 2011

Hawaii's largest shoreline fishing tournament, the Tokunaga Ulua Challenge, set a record for participation with 535 anglers. There was a 40% sign up for the "Barbless Challenge." The BCH outreach booth, manned by Earl Miyamoto and Lisa White of the State, gave way nearly all of the materials that were prepared for the tournament. They did a great job in support of the project.

This year the barbless anglers held their own and then some by weighing in 20 fish. In the ulua division BCH uluas took 3rd (68.3 lbs), 9th (49.1 lbs), and 10th (48.8 lbs)

places. The overall tournament winner weighed in a 75.2 lb ulua. In the omilu division BCH omilus took 1st (21.4 lbs) and 4th (18.3 lbs) places. Another catch that needs recognition is female angler Cheryl Tsang's barbless 5.6 lb omilu, because there just aren't a whole lot of women anglers out there. This was her first barbless catch. Mike Tokunaga recognized our BCH project and had some very nice things to say about it during the awards ceremony. The Big Island Video News covered the tournament and awards ceremony and reported on it (http://www.bigislandvideonews.com/) in their news cast.

At this year's tournament the project recognized Mike Tokunaga for his invaluable long term support and contributions to the project and for promoting responsible fishing. The BCH project presented Mike with a "Certificate of Appreciation" signed by Sam Pooley, Mike Seki, and Kurt Kawamoto. Additionally, Randall's "Reef and Shore Fishes of the Hawaiian Islands" was given to Mike in thanks for the significant contributions he has made in helping the fishermen, PIFSC, and the fish, turtles, and seals.

36th Hilo Casting Club Tournament, July 16, 2011

The Hilo Casting Club's 36th annual tournament hosted a Barbless Challenge again this year. The 67 barbless anglers in this relatively small tournament made up 54% of the total participants. Eleven of these anglers weighed in 15 fish. Six of these 15 placed in the overall tournament. In the Ulua division barbless placed 7th (64.3 lbs), 9th (55.4 lbs), 10th (51.4 lbs), 12th (50.5 lbs), and 13th (50.2 lbs). In the Omilu division barbless placed 5th (13.1 lbs). Club president Kahana Itozaki led by example catching 7 uluas on barbless. He brought 4 to the scales and tagged the remaining 3 for science. One ulua tag recovery occurred during the tournament and again more uluas were tagged than papios during this event. The largest ulua for the tournament was landed by Mel Hirayama, 72 years young. He won with a 100.0 pound white ulua which is the 7th of his unbelievable career... and he's not done with fishing yet.

BCH Exceptional Catches - 2011

Kahana Itozaki Catches The Second Barbless Circle Hook 100 Pounder

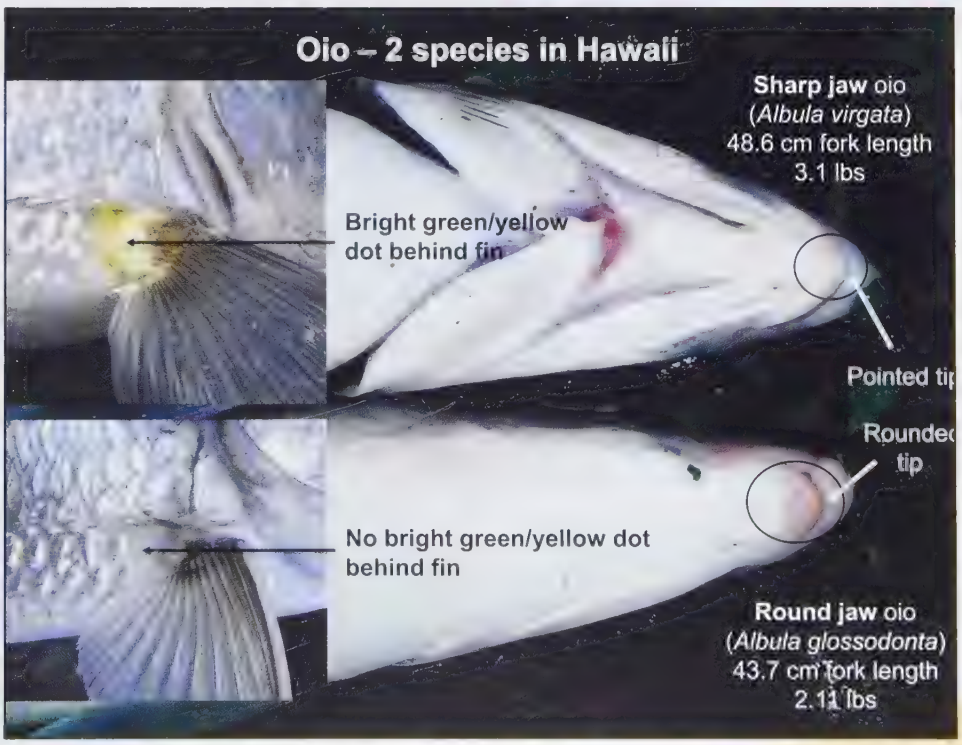
The Hilo Casting Club's September club tournament was a doozy this year. Many big fish were weighed in by the club members. This year the winning ulua topped out the scale at 101.2 pounds. This special ulua was caught by HCC president Kahana Itozaki using a barbless circle hook. This 101.2 lb ulua is his 4th hundred pounder of his career but just his first using a barbless circle hook. This is the second hundred pound ulua for the BCH project since it started in 2005.

Kahana was fishing alone at his secret spot after taking it over from friends. His friends reported that they had gotten bites and that they had a good sized ulua get pinned down on the left side of the spot. It was pinned down for 5 hours before it got off (the barbed circle hook) and floated away. They estimated it to be in the 50-60 lb range. They left and Kahana took over the spot and made his slides with fresh bait. Kahana soon got his bite and after a tough battle it too got pinned down on the left side. Instead of getting anxious and doing anything to break the line he elected to "wait it out" in hopes of the ulua untangling itself or floating free. Ten hours of waiting later he made the decision to break the line hoping that only the lead line was snagged and that the ulua could then be reeled in. Gloving the line broke only the lead line, luck was on his side. He reeled the big fish in then took an hour to get it up the cliff by himself. I guess the big fish had his name on it from the start. This was a well-deserved catch for the recently converted barbless circle hook angler. The project is now at #2 and counting for barbless hundred pounders.

Congratulations to Kahana on his historic catch and many thanks for contributing to science by donating the head and gonads (eggs) to the State Ulua Tagging Project. Just how old was that 101.2 pound grandma you caught?

MONK SEAL SIGHTINGS HOTLINE:
808-220-7802

MARINE TURTLE STRANDING HOTLINE:
808-983-5730



BCH Exceptional Catches - 2011

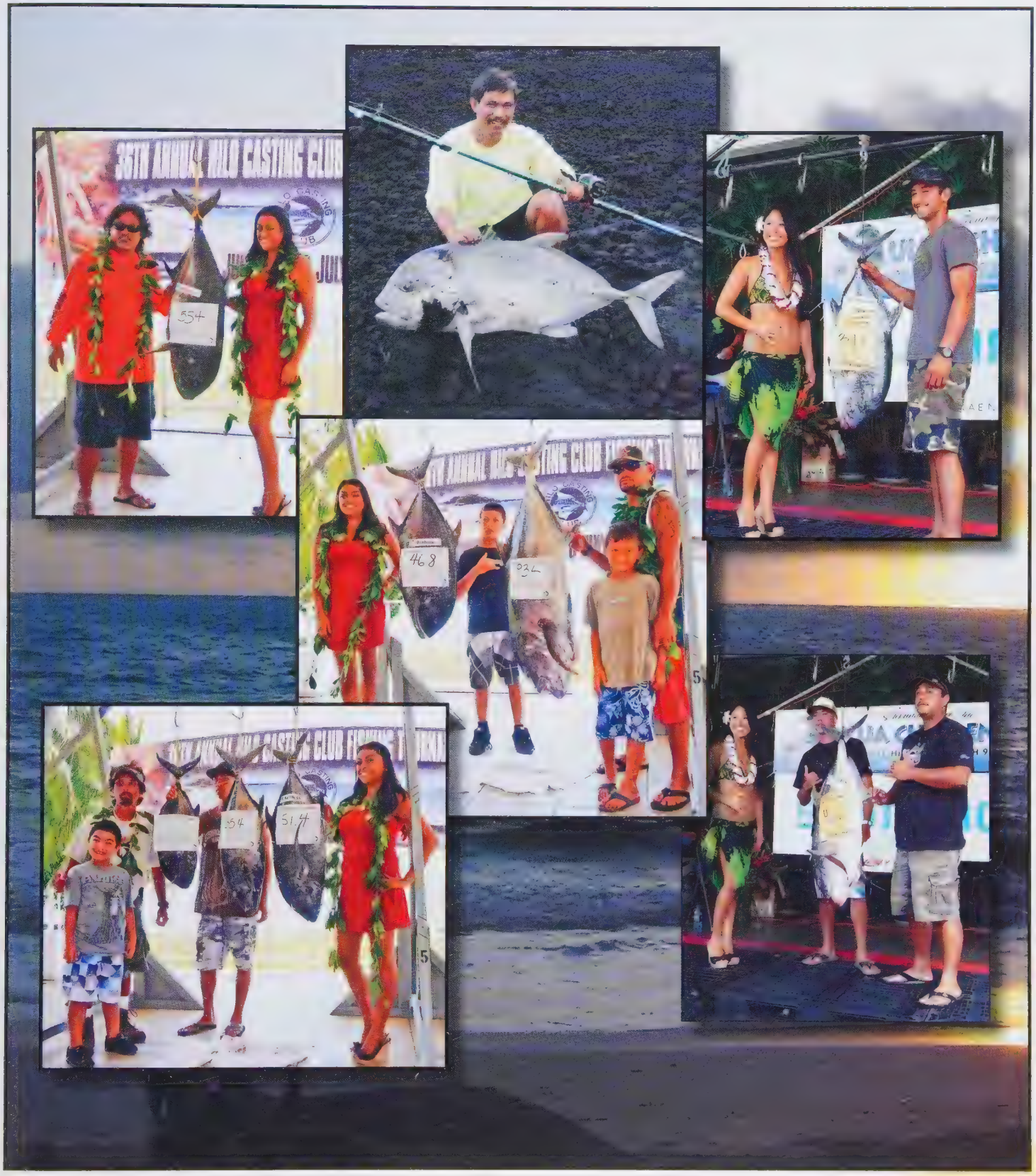
6th Annual Fishing and Seafood Festival Highlight

This year the Barbless Circle Hook (BCH) project was pleased to have our two award winners participate in the outreach event at the festival. The estimated 25,000 attendees were treated to meeting the 2 BCH award winners, who greeted and talked story with festival goers at the BCH outreach booth. They each talked about their own experiences in using the barbless circle hooks. Kahana was the old experienced pro with many years of experience and ulua catches. Stephen is the first-time user and caught a huge ulua by using the hooks. These Hilo Casting Club fishermen spent the entire morning talking to other fishermen. They are both believers in the effectiveness of the hooks.

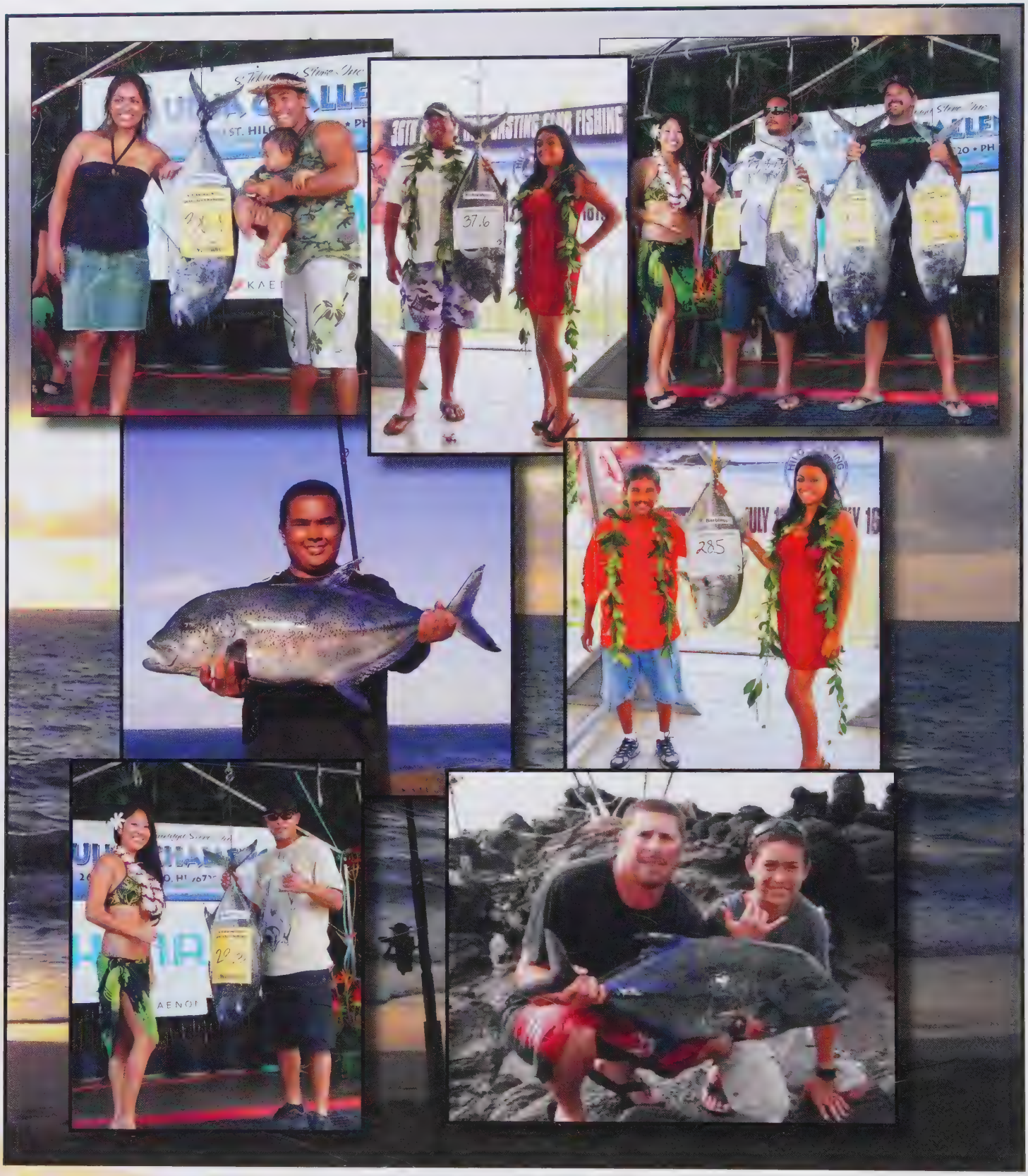
The outreach event was enhanced by the State Ulua Tagging project in the adjoining booth, which featured Kahana's 101.2-pound ulua head. Also on display were another couple of ulua heads cut open to show the otic capsule which contains the otoliths (ear bones). Kahana donated the head of his fish to the tagging project which will be extracting the otoliths in an effort to estimate the age of these large apex predators. As the crowd traveled back and forth between the booths, they talked to the fishermen, and looked at the ulua heads, and mounted otoliths in a microscope. This outreach event displayed to the public the whole concept of doing science and its importance. It also showed the fishermen that they too can become involved in helping their own fishery.

The award winners were honored center stage at the noontime activities. Dr. Mike Seki, Deputy Director of the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, presented the prestigious "Largest Barbless Circle Hook Ulua for 2011" award to Stephen Arquitola for his 95.7-pound white ulua. Dr. Seki also presented the "100 pounder" award to Hilo Casting Club President Kahana Itozaki for his 101.2- pound white ulua. This is only the second 100-pound plus ulua caught on a barbless circle hook. Congratulations to both Hilo Casting Club members for leading by example and making such impressive catches.

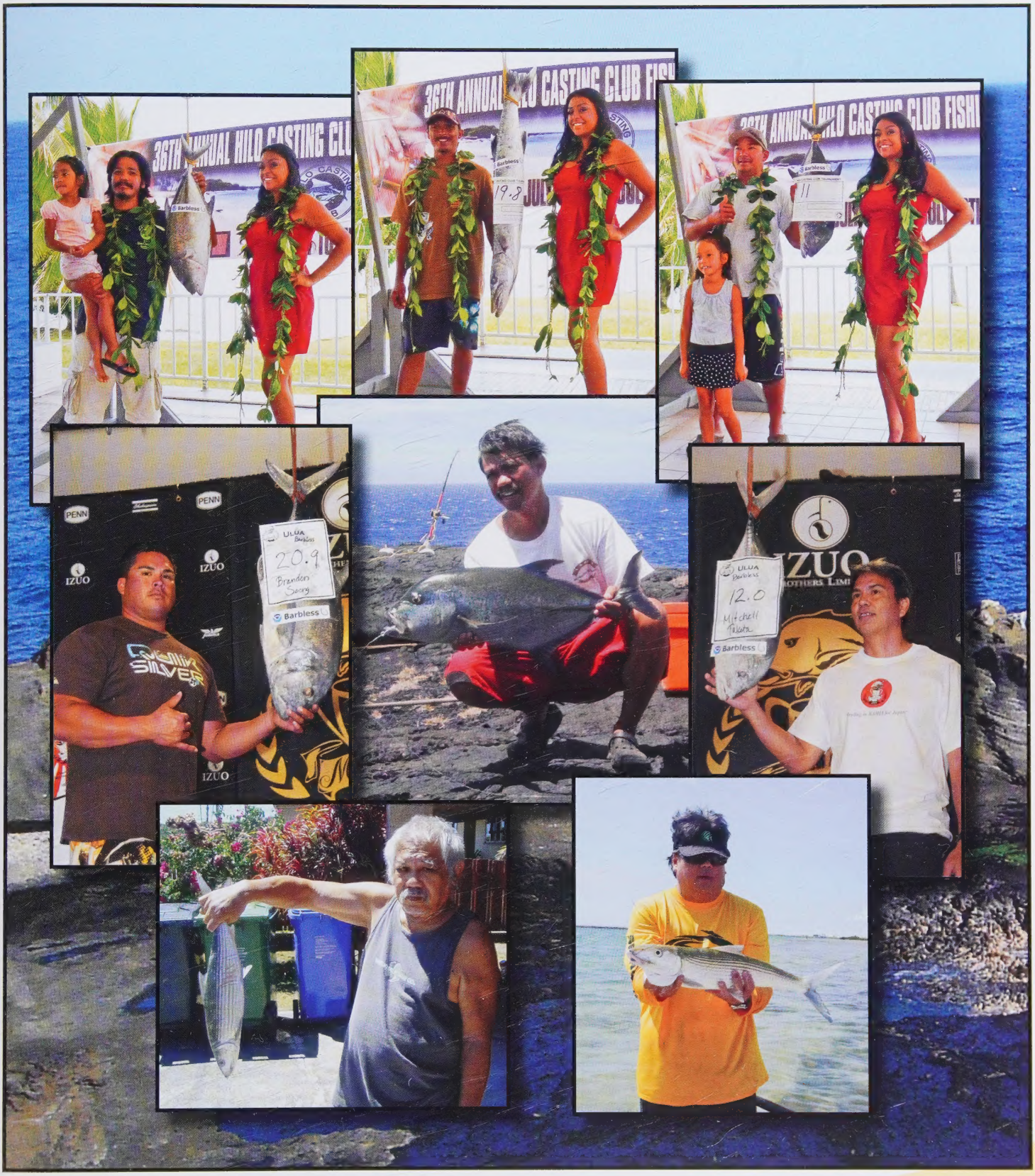
Barbless Circle Hook Catches By You!



Barbless Circle Hook Catches By You!



Barbless Circle Hook Catches By You!



Barbless Circle Hook Catches By You!

If you would like to have your barbless catches listed, please call, e-mail, or write me and I'll be glad to add it to the growing list of anglers and catches.

Send us photos of your barbless hook catches so we can add them to our growing photo list. Sending in your photos will give us implicit permission to use them for publicizing the NOAA Barbless Circle Hook Program.

For more info, contact: Kurt Kawamoto (808) 983-5326 or Kurt.Kawamoto@noaa.gov. 2570 Dole Street, Hon., HI 96822-2396.

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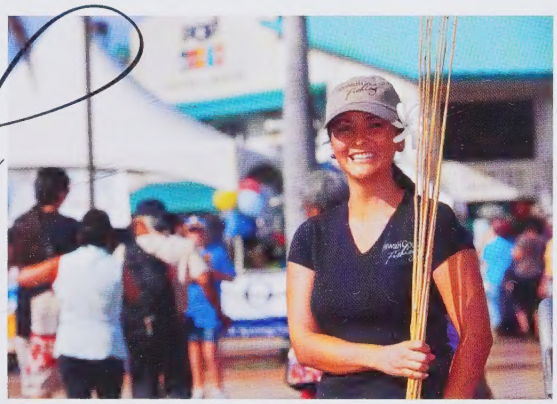

Photos by Brad Goda Photography and Tammy Takimoto

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